

Appl. No. 09/987,776  
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### REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 6, 11, 29, 30, 36, 40, 42 and 50 have been amended, claims 2, 20-28 and 43-49 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein, and claims 13-19 have been allowed. Claims 1, 6-12, 29-42, 50 and 51 remain pending and under consideration.

Claim 26 stands objected to because of formalities. Claim 26 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein, rendering the rejection moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 6-10 stand rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to point out and particularly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 6 has been amended to more clearly set forth "determining the slope", as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 2, 4, 5, 11, 12, 29, 36-41, 48, 50 and 51 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Further, claims 6-10 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 USC § 112.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 2, claim 6 has been amended as set forth above and to include the limitations of claim 1, claim 11 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 1, claim 29 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 27 and 28, claims 36 and 40 have been amended to include the limitations of claim 27, claim 42 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 48, and claim 50 have been amended to include the limitations of claims 49 and 42. Accordingly, allowance of claim 1 and claims 3-5 dependent thereon, independent claim 6 and claims 7-10 dependent thereon, independent claim 11 and claim 12 dependent thereon,

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independent claim 29 and claims 30-35 dependent thereon, independent claim 36 and claims 37-39 dependent thereon, independent claim 40 and claim 41 dependent thereon, independent claim 42, and independent claim 50 and claim 50 dependent thereon is respectfully requested.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the claims of the present application are in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney to attend to these matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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